lation and mismanagement merit no immediate benefit even from immediate repentance.——We are much mistaken if the following practice, systematically adopted on various lines, do not also prove to be a miscalculation. A traveller on the Great Western complains in the *Times*, that finding himself and his family in a second-class carriage compartment with a man and woman who were both drunk, and complaining to the guard of their indecent and insulting conduct, he was very smartly turned over to the tender mercies of a madman who had been forced into another second class carriage by a keeper and left alone! The complainant was thus compelled at length to 'stand and deliver' the first-class fare, for want of which he had thus suffered the practical joke of being 'turned out of the frying-pan into the fire,' till 'done' to a turn by roasting, failing frying.——The Torquay extension of the South Devon line has been opened, so that this "queen of western watering places" will now be placed within five and a half hours' journey from London.——On 13th inst. the large cylinder of the hydraulic press intended to be used at Bangor to raise the tubes of the Britannia-bridge was cast at the Bank Quay Foundry, Warrington. This cylinder weighs about 25 tons. It will have to sustain a pressure of upwards of 1,000 tons when at work.——The final operation of lowering the second tube-bridge at Conway, and the placing it on its permanent bed, has been effected, and the tube is now in use for the transit of trains.——Railway property has followed, in America, the same downward course as in this country.——Throughout all British America there do not exist 20 miles of railway; in the United States there are 8,000 miles.

LONDON BUILDINGS.

THE BRITISH ALMANAC AND COMPANION FOR 1849.*

The companion to the British Almanac contains its usual large amount of general information, including a valuable paper by Mr. De Morgan on the first Six Books of Euclid; an account of the Ordnance Surveys; an essay on the Progress of Organic Chemistry, and others. Under the head of legislation and statistics, abstracts of important public acts are given. The section on Public Improvements contains interesting notices, under separate heads, of churches, public buildings, stations, &c., and from these we make the following extracts:—

Alterations at the Bank.—"On first hearing that something was about to be done to the exterior of the Bank, with the view of giving it greater loftiness, we hoped that Mr. Cockerell had been instructed to reshape the centre of the south front, and there introduce an order upon a larger scale than that of the wings; and could he there have applied some of the ideas shown in his design for the west front of the Royal Exchange, the centre of the Bank, now the most unsatisfactory part in the whole edifice, would have been materially improved. As it is, very great improvement has been effected with very slight alterations, and those confined entirely to the upper part of the building. To the centre portion of the façade nothing more has been done than giving it a better and richer cornice, and adding a handsome balustrade, crowned with vases; yet even this slight change is one greatly for the better. In the wings, improvement shows itself more decidedly: there the attic has been raised several feet, and is made to form bold masses over the end pavilions of each wing, connected together with a balustrade, behind which the intermediate portion of the attic is set considerably back, whereby a most happy sort of variety is produced, together with play of lines and of light and shade. The advanced portions of the attic are admirably treated, and display some successful novelty. The window, for instance, which is introduced into each of these masses, and which is altogether so different from the usual character of windows so situated, produces an effect as pleasing as it is singular; and while it prevents that appearance of heaviness which might else have attended the increased height of the attic, the opening there serves to set off and render more apparent the solidity which prevails in the lower part of the edifice."

Christ Church, Highbury, "which has just been completed and consecrated, is a work highly creditable to the taste and ability of its architect, Mr. T. Allom. The building displays itself well, it being so situated that it can be closely approached and inspected on every side; and as unity of character and attention to finishing have been observed for the whole of the exterior, it is marked by an equality of merit rarer than it ought to be. The exterior, which is of Kentish rag, with Bath stone dressings, shows a cruciform arrangement, with a tower and spire within the re-entering angle formed by the nave and transept on the north side, so that it recedes from the west front. The spire has gabled and crocketted lucarnes rising from its base, and other lights of similar form, but very much smaller and plainer in its upper part. Internally the plan is equally novel and commodious, for in the centre, or at the intersection of the transept, it becomes an octagon of four wide and four narrower sides, with as many open arches, the smaller ones being on the diagonals of the plan. Besides producing pleasing perspective combinations from every point of view, this disposition allows the pulpit and reading-desk (placed against the pillars of the chancel arch), to be seen nearly equally distinctly from all parts of the church."

New Coal Exchange, Thames-street.—"If any thing can excuse the unaccountably queer taste shown in the new Coal Exchange, it must be its situation in such a defile as Lower Thames-street. The building was mentioned in our last as being then about to be commenced, and, with the exception of the campanile over the curved loggia at the south-west angle, nearly the whole of the exterior is erected, and fairly astonishes us, so anomalous and incoherent is it in every respect. Not only is it full of incongruities as a general composition, but many of the features and details are not merely poor and bad, but absolutely barbarous and indescribably grotesque, and apparently for the very purpose. One of the unlucky singularities in the design is, that while the other windows are comparatively plain, those of the third floor—for there are no fewer than three upper stories, which occasions a very lodging-house look—have pediments which come immediately beneath the general cornice; and, instead of resting upon string course, or dado, or being left without any thing beneath them, there is beneath each of them a nondescript something, which is meant, perhaps, to belong to them, and also to serve as ornament over the second floor windows. This must suffice, by way of specimen of the deformities here heaped together, it being quite impossible to explain forms and fancies so *outré* that architectural language has no terms for them."

Baths and Washhouses, Orange-street, Leicester-square.—"The front, which exhibits a ground floor and upper one, has three arched entrances, viz., one at each end, and another in the centre break. These doorways are wholly of stone, with Doric pilasters and entablatures, in the Anglo-Italian style of the 16th century. On the upper floor there are three large square-headed windows, on each side of the centre break, making, together with the one there, seven windows in the length of the front: all of them are divided by mullions into four lights, and are besides double transomed. The elevation finishes above in a series of small ornamental gables (some angular, others curved), corresponding in number and situation with the three windows on either side of the centre. Another and novel feature, although it does not belong to the front, it being in the rear of it, is a large chimney or funnel, which shows as a slender square tower rising up from the building, and may be seen from Leicester-square."

* C. Knight, Fleet-street.

FIRE-PROOF STAIRS.—Might not staircases be constructed of slate slabs and T angle iron, which might be masked by a moulded string-board, and the stairs painted and carpetted, as well as wood; and would not the roof of a second or third, or even a fourth-rate house, be light and durable if constructed with angle-iron rafters and strutts and rod-iron ties, covered either with slate or metal?—D. R.

ANTIQUITIES IN CHESTER.

BRITISH ARCHÆOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION.

IT is finally determined to hold the next congress of the Archæological Association at Chester in the month of August next, requisitions to that effect having been previously forwarded to the association by the dignitaries of the church and the local authorities of the city. A committee has been formed, consisting of the mayor, Sir E. S. Walker (chairman), and other influential gentlemen of the town, and Mr. W. Ayrton is appointed honorary secretary. The proceedings, there is no doubt, will prove more than usually interesting, as the city and neighbourhood abound with antiquities which will fill the lovers of antiquarian lore with food for reflection and discussion.

The excavations that are at present going on for the drainage of the city present a favourable opportunity for observation, as relics are repeatedly dug up, or antiquities laid bare, of ancient British or Roman origin, which are worthy of preservation or of record. Last week, as the workmen were employed in digging a drain at the back of some houses in Northgate-street, they discovered an ancient urn and other relics, which are generally supposed to be of Roman origin. The fragments that were found in the urn were supposed to be the bracelets of a Roman lady whose ashes it contained. The rings also found in the urn are supposed to be the ring-money, such as were used by the ancient Britons, and described by Julius Cæsar as being in use when he effected the subjugation of this country.

The fragment of a cannon-ball, which weighed 11 lbs., and which appears to be about one-third of one, and supposed by some to be a chain-shot, has probably lain there since the city was bombarded by the Parliamentary forces under Oliver Cromwell, in Oct. 1645, when the East-gate was severely cannonaded. A subterranean passage has also been discovered passing under two of the principal streets: this is hewn out of the solid rock and sandstone, and it is just wide enough to allow one person to go along, with wider parts at intervals, used, no doubt as passing places. This passage has been opened before, and it appears its internal dimensions are 16 feet high by 5 feet wide, and divided by planks into a double roadway, one above the other, each 8 feet high. This subterraneous passage has never yet been explored; its object has been, there is no doubt, either for defence or religious purposes.

In excavating for a sewer in Eastgate-street, two pavements were found, the one 3 feet and the other 6 feet below the surface, made of round stones, carefully sorted and set in a durable manner. It may be considered that, originally, the streets were level with the rows, that they were afterwards excavated, probably for greater security in time of war, and since then, at two intervals of time, they have been raised to improve the entrance to the city, and the paving stones were not thought of sufficient value to have them removed. The rows now are from 4 to 9 and 10 feet above the level of the streets, and the ground at the back of the houses maintains its original level. The rows are thought by some parties to have been intended and used for the purposes of defence in time of war; by others it is stated they were intended as vestibules to the houses of the wealthy, and as such were used by the Romans.

Tiles have been discovered having the stamp of the imperial legion (LEG. V. V.) upon them, also tiles apparently impressed with the armorial bearings of some mighty Romans. The 20th legion, according to history, garrisoned Chester in A.D. 61. It is to be hoped that the meeting of the association in this city will be the means of preserving their antiquities from desecration, restoring those that need restoration, or, if that is impossible, establishing records of them for the benefit of the present and future generations.

PORTABLE LETTER-COPYING MACHINE.—Wells and Haverson, of Gresham-street, have given us the opportunity of trying their portable letter-copying machine, which forms simply a short roll, easily put away in the travelling bag, and is very inexpensive. We find it answer the purpose very well.

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